The Government is clear that acts of violence against the minority communities, whenever and in whatever form they occur, must be dealt with sternly and exemplary punishment awarded to the perpetrators.

Increase in Oil Import Bill

1185. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the oil import bill of Government are increasing day-by-day;

(b) if so, the details of oil import bill during the last three financial years;

(c) the estimated oil import bill during the current financial year;

(d) whether Government have taken any steps to check the increase in oil import bill; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) (a) and (b) The value of crude oil and petroleum products imported during 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98 is as under:—

Value : Rs./Crores

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98*
Crude Oil	11517.00	18538.19	15897.15
POL products	12577.85	15633.49	12431.92
TOTAL :	24094.85	34171.68	28329.07

*Provisional.

(c) The Oil Economy Budget (OEB) for 1998-99 has estimated foreign exchange requirement of US $ 8418.10 million for import of crude oil and petroleum products.

(d) and (e) In order to contain oil import bill, steps are being taken to increase crude oil production in the country through application of improved technologies, better understanding of reservior behaviour, development of new fields, additional development of existing fields and by inviting foreign and private capital in the upstream sector. The refining capacity is also being increased in the country by expansion of existing refineries in the public sector and setting up of refineries in joint sector and private sector to minimise the product imports.

Reduction in Diesel Price

1186. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the diesel price is likely to be cut in tune with the fall in the international price of crude oil; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the reduction would be effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) (a) and (b) Government announced a comprehensive package to end the oil pool deficit on September 1, 1997. The Government also decided that hence forth the price of HSD would be on import parity basis.